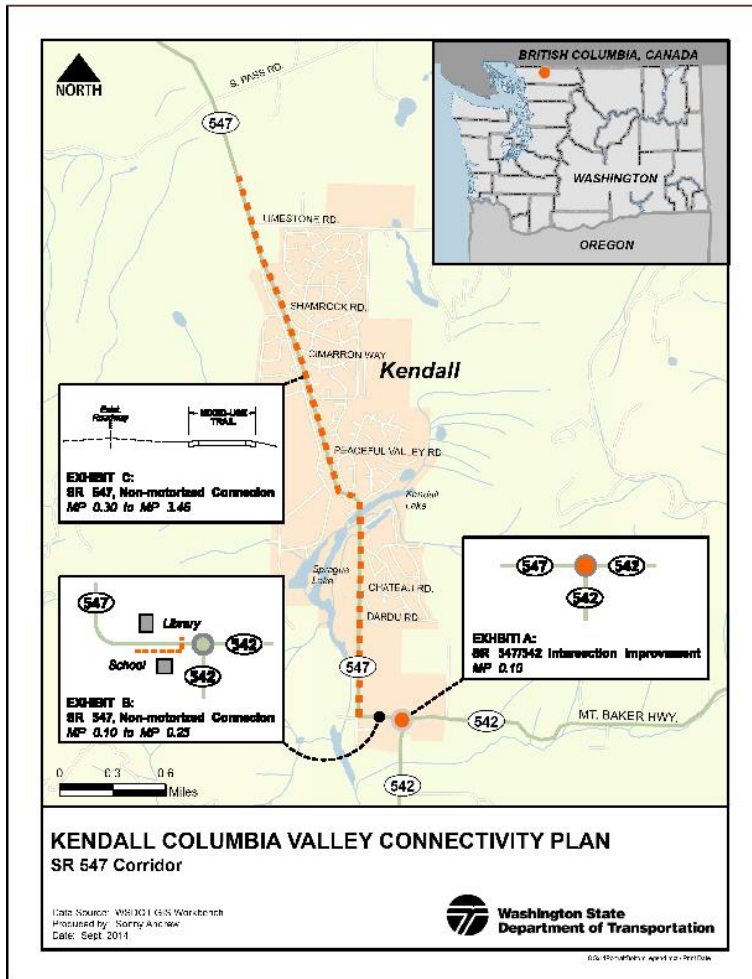


Transforming Washington Communities

Whatcom County Community Transformation Grant Success Story

Safe Physical Activity in the Kendall & Columbia Valley:



For years, residents of the Kendall and the Columbia Valley urban growth area in rural Whatcom County have been concerned about their community and the ability of residents to get safely to community resources. Many of the 4,140 residents in the area are low income and are one or no-car households, making it difficult for families to access community services safely. State Route 547 is the only roadway that runs through the community. Since June 2012, there have been four separate bicycle and pedestrian collisions, two of which were fatal.

The Whatcom County Health Department engaged in a community-driven process for planning to improve safety and connectivity in the Kendall and Columbia Valley region. They

provided technical assistance to the Kendall/Columbia Valley Connectivity Plan Committee (the committee) and connected citizens with decision makers. This was made possible with support from the Community Transformation Grant and Affordable Care Act. The Committee's planning has resulted in a vision of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that will safely connect residences to Kendall Elementary School, the local library, commercial services, and the community center, which includes the Head Start facility.

This collaboration has led to key accomplishments that are important stepping-stones to achieving the community's vision. These successes include:

- Creating a new school speed zone with flashing signs at Kendall Elementary School and reducing the speed limit from 55 to 40 mph near the library and school.
- Washington State Department of Transportation securing \$2.5 million in grant funding for roundabout construction, including sidewalks and marked pedestrian crossings.
- Reducing the speed limit along SR 547 from 55 to 45 mph.
- Receiving a National Park Service technical assistance award to assist with public outreach and engagement for shared-use trail planning and design, including community meetings and events.



Pictured above are community members from the Kendall and Columbia Valley Connectivity Plan committee. Left to right: Georgina Furlong-Head, Vern Yadon, Rebecca Boonstra and Jerry DeBruin.

Building on the momentum of these successes, the committee continues to engage the community in developing a plan for a shared-use facility, with a focus on sustainability. They recently collaborated with Whatcom Council of Governments and Washington State Department of Transportation to apply for funding to complete trail design and engineering. The group has received commitment by Whatcom County Parks Department to maintain the facility once built.

The power of community is evident in building a safer community with improved environmental opportunities for physical activity, social connectedness, and access to services. As one community member and library representative stated, "This project is important to the development of community in Kendall. This connectivity plan will not only bring the community together physically but, will bring a sense of pride and commitment."